

by date is highly encouraged. You can search full text in the reports but that has all the usual issues. Results are given based on how often terms appear. Topic and Report title searching are recommended to cut to the chase. The user can also browse through topics with the browse tabs at the top of the page. These are very effective for drilling through broad topics to find reports on more specific issues.

The articles are based around an overarching topic but the report will focus on one specific element. For example, the broad topic could be U.S.-Iran Relations with the specific question "Will the nuclear deal ease tensions?" Each report is made up several sections. These sections are one of the reasons this resource tends to work well for students who are learning about a new topic or perhaps not yet ready for fine-tuned focus of academic journals.

The sections begin with an introduction and overview; these are easy to read and provide a solid background to understand the topic. The overview can be lengthy, providing recent history, knowledge of key figures, and so forth. Following this is the Background section which provides an in-depth historical perspective of the issue at hand. This leads to Current Situation which digs into the issue as it stands followed close by the Outlook section discussing what is likely to happen in the near future. This handy breakdown allows researchers to pick what they need. If they already have working background knowledge of topic, they can skip the early sections and focus on the current and prospective sections.

As a researcher works their way through the sections citation links, provided as number tags that will display a citation with a simple mouse-over so one does not need to click back and forth, are available. Sidebars are often employed to explain extra but pertinent information without obstructing the flow of the report. Images are used to illustrate people or places of import or to drive home an example in a concrete manner.

Following these primary sections are a several valuable pieces that can help further the student's research needs. The Pro/Con section offers two perspectives around a particular question related to the topic. Continuing with the previous example, the Pro/Con question for U.S.-Iran Relations is "Should the United States seek Closer Ties with Iran?" Each side answers this question through two individuals, usually not the author of the main report, whose experience or authority is given in a short overview under their name. While not typically used as an 'academic' source, these perspectives can offer alternative views and arguments that the report does not explore and can supply alternative paths of inquiry for the user. Further sections continue in this vein.

Chronology provides historical context in the form of a timeline of events that have had an effect

upon the discussed topic. Short Features discusses some of the major news surrounding the topic. A Bibliography is provided for additional reading. This is broken into sections for books, reports, studies and articles. Links are provided when possible. Contacts provide a list of pertinent organizations that might have additional information or interest in the topic. Footnotes provide a list of citations used in the report and About the Author provides information about the author. Finally, The Next Step offers news articles pointing to changes or people to watch as the issue continues to be researched, watched, etc. Each section creates the full report, which can be downloaded as printable PDF document that appears as the report would in print with necessary pagination.

The report helps a researcher begin to grasp and parse out a new social or political topic and then provides paths to further research materials. This is a major asset to undergraduate students who are still honing their research skills. As a user of this database, both as a student, researcher and librarian, I would highly recommend it for any undergraduate university that has law, politics, and/or society programmes.

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Encyclopedia of Global Environmental Governance and Politics

Edited by Philipp H. Pattberg and Fariborz Zelli

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This work starts with an assumption that Earth's environment is in rapid decline and that we need to take a serious look at the factors that may play into this decline. It is intended to be a starting point for discussion on a sustainable future for our planet.

This work consists of 68 chapters which are divided into seven parts with several chapters in each part. Part One talks of concepts and definitions with chapters that discuss consumerism, environment and nature, inclusive development, etc. Part Two discusses theories and methods

including chapters on cost-benefit analysis, deep ecology, etc. Part Three is entitled actors (not the Hollywood type) including chapters on topics such as civil society, European Union, media, private sector, religious movements, states, etc. Part Four is institutions which includes chapters on clubs, mega-conferences, public-private partnerships, regimes and more. Part Five is called issue areas. There are chapters on air pollution, the Arctic, chemicals, climate change, etc. Part Six examines cross-cutting questions and emerging topics such as the green economy, institutional fragmentation and millennium development goals and sustainable development goals. The last part discusses borders and interlinkages which include such topics as agriculture, food, health, poverty, security and trade. If the division into parts seems confusing, the editors have included an alphabetical listing of the chapters as well as a listing of the figures and tables throughout the work. There is also a detailed index at the end of the volume.

The chapters are written by academic professors from around the world at some of the world's leading universities. Each chapter has the same structure. Each starts with definitions, followed by key concepts, then key findings and finally an outlook. There is then, in most chapters, a list of acronyms, which is extremely useful for the reader, then the references followed by further recommended literature.

The writing is sometimes dense but the chapters are thought provoking and should generate a lot of discussion. The editors hope that this will be an essential reference. They hope even more that it soon will become unnecessary because we, as world inhabitants, will make the changes necessary to live more sustainably.

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Handbook of the Politics of China

Edited by David S.G. Goodman

Edward Elgar

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2015

xix + 553 pp.

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Handbooks of Research on Contemporary China

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Review DOI [10.1108/RR-05-2016-0129](https://doi.org/10.1108/RR-05-2016-0129)

The *Handbook of the Politics of China*, which forms part of an ongoing series on different

aspects of contemporary China, is stated by its editor to “provide an introduction to most of what the student of China’s politics will need to address, and to point to where that student might go next”. To these ends it offers 26 chapters, by 32 Chinese or Western authors, on various specific aspects of the subject, grouped under the general headings of Leadership, Institutions and Structures; Public Policy; Political, Economic and Social Change; and International Relations. These were first presented at a conference in Nanjing in 2014 and thus reflect the situation up to that date.

The collective authorship of the book results in a curious discrepancy between some chapters and others. Some authors have interpreted their brief (which perhaps may not have been set out in detail) as being to provide a literature review in the strictest sense, but others have broadened out their scope to a general discussion of the subject in question. Thus the chapter on government finance includes not a single financial figure, whereas that on economic policy does set out to explain how that policy is made. In the section on external relations, the chapter on China’s relations with the USA confines itself mostly to a literature review, as does that on Europe, while the chapters on China’s relations with East and South-East Asia go into specific details on the disputes in these regions. The author of the chapter on *The Study of Elite Political Conflict in the PRC*, not afraid of provoking controversy, goes so far as to assert that contemporary Western assessments of this important subject have been either “dramatically wrong” or “in critical respects speculation that cannot be verified”.

In addition to specific references accompanying some of its chapters, the *Handbook* is supplied with a bibliography of 1,400 books, articles, government publications and electronic files, the great majority in English, and of fairly recent provenance, the latest in date being from 2013. Whereas the index is quite comprehensive, there are no maps, a surprising omission when discussing such matters as provincial politics, regional policy, and administrative subdivisions, not to speak of the controversial and conflicting territorial claims in the South China Sea.

The participants in the conference from which the book is derived, especially those resident in China, will have had to restrain themselves in any possible criticism of the policies of the Communist Party, and this restriction is evident in several chapters. Thus, for instance, the chapter on nationality policy, though criticising it in general terms for its assimilationist line towards minorities, says hardly anything about the practical application of this policy in Tibet and Xinjiang. The chapter